

CONTEMPORARY STORIES OF "TAKU HE" OR "BIGFOOT"  
IN SOUTH DAKOTA AS DRAWN FROM NEWSPAPER  
ACCOUNTS

by MARK A. HALL

ABSTRACT

Increased attention is being given to stories of large hairy manlike animals in anthropological literature. Such beings in North America are popularly labeled "Bigfoot" and "Sasquatch." Stories of more than one such animal were told in western South Dakota during 1977 from the summer into the fall. Using newspaper accounts as sources, a chronology of these stories produces a coherent pattern of animal movements. Large tracks associated with the stories are described from the same sources.

January 1978

The publication in December 1977 of The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch<sup>1</sup> (Sprague and Krantz 1977) is an indication of the rising interest in the anthropological community in the subject of Sasquatch and Bigfoot reports that have been widely publicized in North America for twenty years at least. This collection of seven articles from the Northwest Anthropological Research Notes resulted from an editorial by Roderick Sprague where he announced

to the anthropologists, zoologists, and other interested researchers of the Northwest that the editors of Northwest Anthropological Research Notes will welcome and view favorably for early publication any reasonably scientific paper dealing with the sasquatch phenomenon. This might include models for study; comparative studies in ethnology, mythology, or linguistics; or bibliographic works. We are not suggesting the acceptance or rejection of belief in the sasquatch but rather the unfettered anthropological study of such beliefs either positive or negative. (Sprague 1970:29)

The resulting articles present the diversity sought by the editors of NARN. Before proceeding we must consider that despite lengthy discussions such as NARN has

published the subject of Sasquatch beings or the Sasquatch phenomenon remains vaguely defined. While the authors sometimes refer to Sasquatch beings as if a population of identical animals was the only consideration, this is not in keeping with the definitions and broad usage of the words "Bigfoot" and "Sasquatch."

The words "Sasquatch," "Bigfoot," and "Omah" have found their way into a standard dictionary of reference by means of 6000 Words: A Supplement to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Kay and others 1976). The editors give this explanation for the words' presence.

For all the years men have lived on earth, they have not exhausted the study of earth's natural history. It is true that discoveries of undescribed and uncatalogued animals and plants are not as frequent as they were in earlier ages, when whole continents were being opened up for scientific exploration. Nor have we yet discovered living things in our exploration of outer space. But we shall probably never feel confident that we know all the forms of life. Few new discoveries are as striking or as controversial as that, as yet unconfirmed, of a large nonhuman primate in the Pacific Northwest. Whether or not he exists, the animal's names, Sasquatch and Bigfoot, are now part of our language. (Kay and others 1976:13a)

"Bigfoot" is defined as a noun that is synonymous with "Sasquatch" (Kay and others 1976:20). "Omah" also appears as a noun equated to "Sasquatch" (Kay and others 1976:141). "Sasquatch" is defined as "a large hairy manlike animal that is reported as existing in the Pacific Northwest" (Kay and others 1976:177). The vague particulars in the description are consistent with the usage of the words which have been applied to any animal suggestive of a large and uncatalogued primate. Usage has overtaken this definition in that the words are now

applied to animals reported outside the Pacific Northwest. But the Northwest is a large territory possessing natural diversity. So in fact different kinds of primates might be represented there and elsewhere, primates that would ultimately fall into varied families, genera, and species upon scientific examination of each kind and then only after considerable debate among specialists in anatomy, primatology, and physical anthropology. In short, the words "Sasquatch" and "Bigfoot" are only popularized labels freely applied to any animal or report of an animal meeting simple criteria such as large feet and an abundantly hairy body.

The same two words owe their creation to Anglo-Americans and are not words having specific Amerindian use or origins. One California newspaperman has repeatedly claimed to have originated the use of "Bigfoot" as applied to stories of manlike beings in 1958 (Genzoli 1976, 1977). His claim is consistent with the record of Bigfoot accounts. While "Sasquatch" has similarities to Amerindian names (Sanderson 1961:47; Suttles 1972:40-41), the word seems to have been coined in imitation of them by J. W. Burns, a teacher who worked with Amerinds in British Columbia (Sanderson 1961:46-47; Green 1968:1). While "Omah" is given as "origin unknown" in 6000 Words, Sanderson (1961:119-120) gives it as a true Amerindian word, Oh-Mah, used by the Húppas.

The subject of these manlike animals then is a broad collection of crudely similar characters in stories. The actual existence of one or more kinds of new primates would have great significance for anthropologists and archaeologists. As habitation sites of greater antiquity are uncovered or are given tentative consideration in North America the idea of near-

human primates becomes a necessary consideration for archaeologists. As Dr. Kenneth A. R. Kennedy observed when considering one of the oldest dates suggested for the disputed Calico site in California, "If it were that old you would expect a different kind of hominid" (Behrens 1971:100). Among the accounts loosely labeled "Bigfoot" may be surviving representatives of a kind or kinds of hominids that may ultimately be found accountable for ancient American tools.

Possibilities of surviving higher primates have world-wide interest, and more discussion of this kind is occurring (Porshnev 1974; Bayanov and Bourtsev 1976). In North America stories suggesting such survival are not confined to the Northwest either as Amerindian accounts or as modern newspaper stories (Coleman and Hall 1970). More stories were told in 1977 by residents of western South Dakota and in a bordering portion of North Dakota. These stories will be the subject of the remainder of this paper. Residents of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation were reported to have given the name "Taku He" to the principal figure in these stories (Atlanta Constitution 1977). However "Taku He" is not a name and is translated from the Lakota language into English as "What is it?" The term is used idiomatically as "wha-cha-ma-callit" is used in English (Lane 1978). The labels of "Bigfoot" and "Sasquatch" were used constantly from August 1977 into January 1978 in newspaper reporting of the stories. No attempt will be made here to attribute specific traits to these labels. The creatures in the following stories will be referred to hereafter simply as "animals," and they have no definition other than those traits given within these stories.

The stories were gathered from newspaper accounts with additional material from one

national news magazine and one television film crew that visited the site of one event.<sup>2</sup> Presently no funding is made available for efforts to investigate and verify such stories with field work. In the absence of any established procedure and with the nonexistence of "trained observers" (such as do exist if one were considering sight reports of known animals such as cougars) the material that follows is an example of the kind of evidence that presently exists regarding large hairy manlike animals.

The twenty-nine stories below have been ordered by the chronology attributed to them by the tellers and take place in the summer and fall of 1977. Undated stories that were placed somewhere within this same time period are given last. Tracks associated with these stories are then described. Following that a brief interpretation of the stories is presented using the assumption that real animals were present to account for all the stories.

#### THE STORIES

Each story is given a number. Date and time of day for the story are given when known. These are followed by the location of the story. All locations are in South Dakota unless otherwise noted. The source of the story is then given as credited in the newspaper account. The story is then related.

No. 1. Summer and fall of 1977.

Southwestern edge of Spearfish, Lawrence County.

Pauline Bennett in a letter to the editor.

Among several people said to have seen animals, Betty Johnson and her daughters Brenda, Bonnie and Becky saw two animals during daylight standing upright in a cornfield eating corn. One animal was seven to

eight feet tall and had the appearance of being black and hairy. The second animal was smaller than the first. It had a brownish-red body and a black face. The animals made high-toned, whistling sounds (Bennett 1977).

No. 2. Happened prior to No. 3.

Red Scaffold, Ziebach County.

Anonymous girl.

A young girl was home alone while her family attended a funeral. She was frightened by a "foul-smelling, hairy creature." She was treated at a hospital in Eagle Butte afterwards (Eagle Butte News 1977).

No. 3. 9 August 1977. 3:00 a.m.

Green Grass, Dewey County.

Anonymous policemen.

Policemen saw something large and hairy resembling an ape moving in a creek bottom. In the beam of a spotlight at a distance of 200 to 300 yards the animal appeared to be six to seven feet tall. Three policemen were present (Eagle Butte News 1977).

No. 4. Middle of August 1977.

One mile east of the bridge over Grand

River at Little Eagle, Corson County.

Todd Alexander, 12, and Chad Alexander, 9.

While riding horseback the two boys saw the "long hairy legs" of a tall animal. The rest of the animal was obscured by bushes (Hall 1977).

No. 5. Took place a few days after No. 4.

Along the Grand River at Little Eagle, Corson County.

Craig Two Hearts, 16.

Two Hearts saw a huge and hairy animal about a quarter mile from him as he was doing repair work on a house (Boeth and Sciolino 1977).

No. 6. 16 September 1977.

About 8 miles east of Little Eagle along  
Grand River, Corson County.

Merle E. Lofgren and Verdell Veo.

The men observed several similar tracks that had the appearance of being made by a human foot except they were about two feet in length. One track was photographed. The prints were 8 to 10 feet apart. The site was reached by driving six miles and walking four miles through rough terrain. The prints were found originally by unnamed persons searching for deer tracks (Lofgren 1977; McLaughlin Messenger 1977a).

No. 7. Middle of September 1977.

Near Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Chris Howiatow.

Howiatow and others were driving in their pasture checking on cattle. They saw something that looked like "a big ape" sitting on a hillside watching them. When they approached it, the animal ran into a brush-filled draw. Frightened cattle then ran up from the bottom of the draw (McLaughlin Messenger 1977c).

No. 8. Middle of September 1977.

Near the Cannonball River in North Dakota.  
Paul Monzelowsky, 60, and his son.

While searching for a stray bull they saw an animal "like a big monkey" that was 8 or 9 feet tall. In a pickup truck they pursued the animal as it ran "as fast as a horse." The animal leaped across a creek and disappeared in the brush (Boeth and Sciolino 1977).

No. 9. 28 September 1977. Nighttime.

One mile east of Little Eagle, Corson  
County.

Nancy Chasing Hawk, Esther Thundershield,  
and Myron Fast Horse.

The three were at the Chasing Hawk  
residence when they heard howling and growling

noises outside. Also dogs were barking. They went outside and turned on the lights of a pickup truck. They saw a "big and hairy" animal run off into the brush. The animal's green eyeshine was observed<sup>3</sup> (Crippen 1977a). Esther Thundershield was quoted as saying, "It's hard to describe... very tall. It doesn't have any shoulders and doesn't bend its legs when it runs" (Capital Journal 1977a).

No. 10. Circa 6 October 1977. At sunrise.

North of Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Mrs. Phoebe Little Dog, 58.

Mrs. Little Dog saw an animal for the first time in a spot where it was later seen again (No. 13 below) (Capital Journal 1977b).

No. 11. 13 October 1977. 1:30 a.m.

Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Lyle Maxon, 48.

Maxon reported hearing a "funny scream." He said, "It was either a bobcat or the creature" (Hasner 1977b).

No. 12. 13 October 1977. In the afternoon.

A wooded area southeast of Little Eagle,  
Corson County.  
Cecilia Thundershield, Dan Uses Arrow  
and Albert Dog.

Thundershield and Uses Arrow were picking mushrooms when they saw an animal, walking slumped over, emerge from the woods 25 yards away. They ran a quarter of a mile to the house of Albert Dog. Dog came out in time to see the animal going back into the woods. Dog described the animal as having long arms that hung almost to its knees and walking slouched over. He could not keep up with the animal but followed its tracks to the Grand River. Where the animal appeared to have landed after jumping a creek he found a clear imprint of a foot in the mud. All

the people in this story are reported to be sexagenarians (Hasner 1977b; McLaughlin Messenger 1977c).

No. 13. 13 October 1977. 5:00 p.m.  
North of Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Mrs. Phoebe Little Dog, 58.

Driving home from work Mrs. Little Dog noticed cattle running in a pasture. About 200 yards behind them she saw an animal that she had seen in the same place about one week earlier (No. 10 above). Following her second experience she was quoted as saying, "They say I have Big Foot fever" (Capital Journal 1977b).

No. 14. 22 October 1977.  
Along the Grand River, Corson County.  
Four anonymous men.

Four men on horseback observed an animal basking in the sun in a field across the Grand River from them. As they watched it got up and ran away. A search party made no contact with the animal (Timber Lake Topic 1977a; Byington 1977).

No. 15. 29 October 1977. Nighttime.  
Kougl ranch, northwest of Timber Lake,  
Dewey County.  
Albert and Deleen Kougl.

The Kougls were awakened by an eerie cry that sounded three times. Mr. Kougl thumped on the inside wall of their trailer home, and they heard no more sounds. The following day Sheriff Ted Schweitzer found large footprints near the Kougl trailer and photographed them. He estimated one print was about fourteen inches long and five inches wide. Later Ray Springer II informed the Sheriff that he had found barefoot tracks about ten inches in length along a creek in the area (Timber Lake Topic 1977b, 1977c; Byington 1977).

No. 16. 29 October 1977. Nighttime.  
Elkhorn Buttes, two miles northeast  
of Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Verdell Veo, Jeff Veo, 15, and one or  
two others.

Verdell Veo, a police officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was with his son and one or two other officers on a butte when one animal was observed in the moonlight. As the animal was followed by some of the men, a second and larger animal was seen through an infra-red scope to be trailing the pursuers of the first animal. A warning was sounded and the humans re-grouped. They ended their pursuit because they had no weapons to match the size of the animals that were eight or nine feet tall (Timber Lake Topic 1977b; Crippen 1977b).

No. 17. 5 November 1977. Nighttime.  
Near Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Verdell Veo, Gary Alexander, and others.  
One animal was seen and surrounded.  
It escaped after hours were spent chasing it. The animal made screams similar to screams heard to the west of the chase. Veo thought one animal had deliberately led them away from a second animal (Timber Lake Topic 1977c).

No. 18. 13 November 1977. Nighttime.  
Northern part of Little Eagle, Corson  
County.  
Mrs. Melde Dog Eagle.

Mrs. Dog Eagle and her children were watching television in their trailer home when they heard noises outside. She heard what she thought was the voice of a woman crying, and the voice cried "Mama" three times. She threw some firecrackers out the door hoping someone would come over, but no one came. The next day large foot tracks were found all around the trailer. Mrs.

Fig. 1.

The experience of Hanna Shooting Bear, aged 70, is told in No. 25. She saw a large animal that left a foul smell in the air. (Courtesy of Jo Hall and the *Mobridge Tribune*)



Fig. 2.

LeMar Chasing Hawk is shown here. His encounter with an animal on a path in Little Eagle is given in No. 28. (Courtesy of Ted Quanrud and the *Bismarck Tribune*)

Gary Alexander who lives at the southeast of the town heard screams the same night (Timber Lake Topic 1977d; Davis 1977).

No. 19. 13 November 1977. Nighttime.  
On the highway north of Little Eagle,  
Corson County.  
Anonymous driver.

Mrs. Gary Alexander told of a man who saw an animal on the highway and in his fright drove off into a ditch. He called for help on his CB radio, and Lyle Maxon, a local rancher, responded. Maxon found the man upset and eager to leave the area. The man was said not to have been drinking (Timber Lake Topic 1977d).

No. 20. 23 November 1977. 4:00 a.m.  
At Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Ed Meller.

Close to a dozen women and children held a party around a campfire in an attempt to lure the animals. Two animals were seen at a distance of fifty yards crouched low in brush. In the illumination of the campfire and a yard light one animal appeared to be black with a beige mantle across its chest. The other animal was all black. One person reported long fingers on the animals (Kinders 1977).

No. 21. 3 December 1977. Between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m.  
Elkhorn Buttes, two miles northeast of Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Gary Alexander, Lowell Olson, Keith Olson.

Two animals were observed emerging from a draw 600 yards distant. The three men watched them for nearly three minutes. The animals turned to look at the men and then moved away. Alexander described one as about eight to eight and a half feet tall and dark in color. The other seemed a foot shorter. The animals were hairy, walked

erect and had a gait different from that of man. Because of the rough terrain and an approaching storm the men had decided against taking their cameras with them that day (Timber Lake Topic 1977e).

No. 22. 5 December 1977. In the afternoon.  
Elkhorn Buttes, two miles northeast of Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Verdell Veo.

Veo saw two animals (Timber Lake Topic 1977e).

No. 23. Undated.  
Nine miles east of La Plant, Dewey County.  
Melvin Garreaux.

An animal was seen by Garreaux. Verdell and Jeff Veo searched the area and found tracks in a washout. A cast was made (McLaughlin Messenger 1977b).

No. 24. Undated. Nighttime.  
Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Arnold Kills Crow and Cecilia Thundershield.  
The two were walking along a path on their

way to visit Dan Uses Arrow when they heard grunting sounds. They saw movement in the brush and detected a gagging smell. They ran to a nearby house and called the police. Lt. Veo, Gary Alexander, and one other man arrived and for twenty minutes pursued something in the brush that made shrieking and bellowing sounds (Boeth and Sciolino 1977; Hall 1977).

No. 25. Undated. Just after 10:00 p.m.  
Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Hanna Shooting Bear, 70.

Shooting Bear (Fig. 1) was working by her kitchen window when she looked out and saw a large hairy shape silhouetted outside the lighted windows of some relatives' mobile home. She was later quoted as saying "It had a funny big head, almost as though it had horns, and wide shoulders. Its arms were

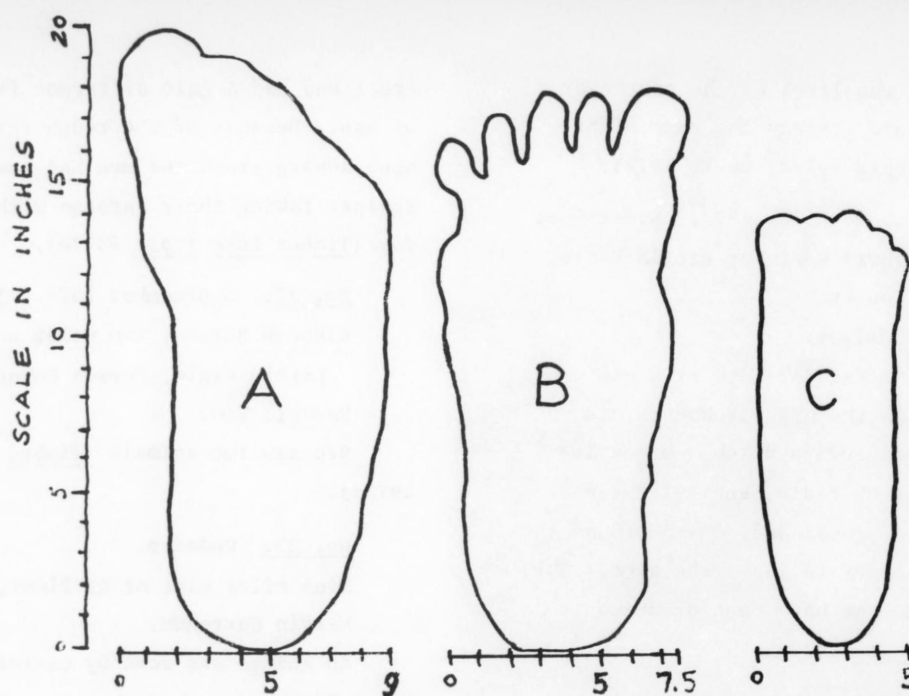


Fig. 3. Outlines of the feet attributed to animals "A", "B", and "C" are drawn by the author to compare size and shape.



Fig. 4. Lt. Verdell Veo, a BIA policeman, holds one of the plaster casts he made during the time animals were reported. (Courtesy of Jo Hall and the Mobridge Tribune)

up and the hands curled down, and it swayed back and forth." She called out to warn her relatives but was not heard over the sound of a radio. She coaxed her dogs outside, but they crawled, whimpering, under a car. Shooting Bear then ran to the relatives' trailer and fell through the doorway. She told them what she had seen. They searched outside but thought the animal had escaped down a brush-filled gully behind the trailer. For ten to fifteen minutes afterwards a smell hung in the air that Shooting Bear compared to that of a dead person (Hall 1977).

No. 26. Undated. Nighttime.

Countryside of Standing Rock Reservation.  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Chasing Hawk.

While driving headlight beams picked out the eyeshine of two green eyes in brush beside a dirt road. With thoughts of shooting a deer Chasing Hawk stopped his pickup and got out with rifle in hand. Instead of a deer he saw an eight-foot-tall hairy animal. He summoned police on his two-way radio, but they found nothing when they arrived (Crippen 1977b).

No. 27. Undated.

Little Eagle, Corson County.  
Rev. Angus Long Elk.

Long Elk and his wife left their home and church in Little Eagle to move temporarily to McLaughlin, fourteen miles away. Long Elk said his wife saw an animal by the Grand River and had been scared since then. Also he was disturbed by the shrieking noise the animal was making all night long around the town (Kinders 1977).

No. 28. Undated (sometime in September).

10:15 p.m.  
Little Eagle, Corson County.  
LeMar Chasing Hawk.

Returning home on a path bordered by scrub bushes Chasing Hawk (Fig. 2) heard a noise and turned to see an animal stand up among some bushes. It looked about nine feet tall. He ran home and did not look back (Kinders 1977).

No. 29. Undated.

Three and one half miles northwest of  
Little Eagle, Corson County.

Gary Alexander and unnamed others.

While snowmobiling Alexander saw two animals about 600 yards distant. They were on the other side of a draw that could not be crossed on a snowmobile. The animals turned their heads to look at the snowmobilers but did not run (Bismarck Tribune 1978).

#### THE TRACKS (Fig. 3)

Large tracks resembling imprints of oversized human feet were described and photographed simultaneous with the occurrence of the stories. Also casts were made of some imprints, and the casts were photographed. Unfortunately all the photographs of prints and casts lack a deliberate scale of size. So when discussing measurements we must take those ascribed to a particular photograph when they are consistent with the scale of features within the photograph. Still all measurements lack precision.

Lt. Verdell Veo was photographed holding a cast that is representative of the largest track reported (Hall 1977). The accompanying text gives a length of twenty inches. This is in keeping with other parts of the picture. Accepting that length the width of the casted track is then nine inches (Fig. 4). Another photograph that was cited in No. 6 was vaguely described as close to this size. The proportions of that print fit those of

a foot twenty inches long by eight and one half wide. A logical assumption associates this largest track with the tallest animal, that with a height of maybe eight and one half feet described in No. 21. This animal will be designated animal "A".

The cast made east of La Plant (as told in No. 23) and a second cast made at the Grand River (Fig. 5; Kinders 1977) appear to be of feet from the same animal. Similar but rough dimensions are ascribed to both. Measurements on the second photograph indicate proportions of eighteen inches by seven and one half inches are possible. This size is acceptable where the casts are photographed with other objects. Again logic associates this track with the animal second in height at seven and one half feet (No. 21). This animal will be designated animal "B".

One print of another size was photographed as told in No. 15. No scale or objects of known size are present in the photograph. The dimensions given by the photographer, Sheriff Schweitzer, are fourteen inches by five inches, and those fit on the print shown. On some unspecified occasion an animal six feet tall was reported seen (Kinders 1977). Possibly this print was made by that animal. This animal will be designated animal "C".

The report of a track ten inches in length included in No. 15 raises the possibility that a fourth animal was making prints. We have no photographs, descriptions, or further references to help us. The length given is within the range of human feet. Keeping this in mind the designation animal "D" will be given to this poorly represented figure.

#### DIFFICULTIES WITH NEWSPAPER MATERIAL

Before discussing these stories further the choice and quality of material taken from

newspapers must be considered. In order to present the range of stories that were current a letter to the editor and stories from anonymous persons have been included with stories heard directly from named persons. The varied character and well-publicized elements of the animal encounters are presented. Sometimes only a scream is heard as in No. 11 or only tracks are found as in No. 6. Tracks, screams and sightings occur in various combinations along with the distinctive odor (Nos. 24 and 25) and green eyeshine (Nos. 9 and 26). Eyeshine is a feature of nocturnal vision in animals caused by a highly reflective layer of cells within the eye called the tapetum. Eyeshine is commonly observed in domestic cats. According to one newspaper account red eyeshine was also reported on some unspecified occasion (Kinders 1977).

Physical traces such as hair and droppings are mentioned in passing in some news accounts but do not appear in any stories. While these would be of great interest to professional scientists there is no indication that they received such scrutiny. One news account suggests a diet for the mysterious animals when it relates that some strange droppings showed that plums, chokecherries and seeds had been eaten. A heavy rain is reported to have washed the matter away before it could be collected (Hall 1977).

The extent of the national publicity given these stories and the various hunting activity that occurred will not be discussed here.

Of course newspaper accounts cannot be relied upon for complete accuracy. An examination of these stories demonstrates that errors are present because accounts of the same incident conflict such as is evident in comparing No. 9 and Footnote 3.



Fig. 5. This plaster cast appears to have been photographed at a slight angle to show the depth of the track. It was lifted from a print along the Grand River and was described as "about 18 inches long by 8 inches across." (Courtesy of Ted Quanrud and the Bismarck Tribune)

Also the two sources for No. 16 conflict on points concerning which persons were in what position during the incident. The disagreements that are apparent here refer not to the animals being seen but to the circumstances surrounding the reported sighting. Also we find an example where a newspaper makes corrections of past mistakes in reporting the stories (Byington 1977).

Another problem is the scarcity of detailed description of the animals that ends up in print. Once the idea of "Bigfoot" becomes current the general character of the animal is assumed, and news accounts relate only that "a creature" or "Bigfoot" has been reported. Where only an "animal" or "animals" are cited in the stories above this was the case.

#### INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

The descriptions and tracks in the stories above are certainly unlike any known animals, and the Teton Dakota seem not to have a precedent for them. Hanna Shooting Bear reportedly was asked if she knew of such a creature or monster in legend. She replied, "No, only of animals in mountains. I do remember that people used to warn their children about a chee-chee that would get them if they weren't good but I never knew what it was supposed to be... something like today's boogie man, I guess" (Hall 1977). One news account pointed out that in March 1977 a theater in McLaughlin ran a movie titled "Sasquatch" (Boeth and Sciolino 1977). In the 1970's the cinematic response to the public interest in "Bigfoot" has produced no less than nine shorts and full-length films using the theme. Television productions have done the same. So the past appearance of such a film is not striking. We would

be interested to learn how a cause and effect relationship between the film and the stories told five months later can be reasonably demonstrated.

The stories cover the last half of 1977 and occur at points up to 180 miles apart (Fig. 6). The settings for most are on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations. The local terrain plays a part in these stories (as in Nos. 7, 25, 29) and provides possibilities for concealment of large animals. One centrally located newspaper observed that "contrary to popular opinion, much of country around Timber Lake is not flat, rolling prairie, but brushy, which appears to be the favorite haunt of the mysterious creature. There are some pastures that aren't visited by ranchers too often; and there are some deep draws and wooded creek areas" (Timber Lake Topic 1977b). A look at U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps for central South Dakota will support this description. Also the deep indentations made by the western shore of Lake Oahe give evidence of the area's uneven terrain (Fig. 6). Lake Oahe is a man-made barrier of water formed behind Oahe Dam and may have played a part in producing this chronicle of stories as we explain below.

In an attempt to make sense of the stories we will make the assumption that real animals were present as described and interpret them accordingly. The hairy appearance cited frequently and the inquisitive behavior (Nos. 20 and 25) point to the animals being intelligent mammals. The sustained upright posture (Nos. 1 and 21) and the feet as known from the reported tracks (Fig. 3) point to the animals being primates with outward similarities to humans. The different tracks suggest that three or four animals were present. Simultaneous appearances do also. Two animals were seen at Elkhorn Buttes

(No. 16) on the night of 29th October. Meanwhile on the same night animal cries were heard and the tracks of "C" and possibly an animal "D" were made near Timber Lake 23 miles away (No. 15). The two largest tracks differ in size and shape and may represent sexual dimorphism. "A" could be an adult male and "B" may be a mate, an adult female. "C" and "D" (if truly present) could be offspring of the first two.

The same animals may account for all the stories if we allow that the animals moved. The first story tells of multiple animals (possibly "B" and "C") near Spearfish during the summer and fall. Reports of a single animal occur progressively eastward in August (Nos. 2 and 3). In September the direction of movement turns northward where reports appear at Little Eagle (Nos. 4-7) and once in North Dakota (No. 8). The height described in No. 8 suggests that "A" was seen. We suggest that "A" may have been scouting ahead of the others and in doing so encountered Lake Oahe. "A" would then have traveled the western shore of the lake seeking a land route or crossing point. (Between Oahe Dam and Bismarck the only crossings are two highway bridges - US 12 and US 212 - and a railroad trestle that runs into Mobridge.) Nos. 9-14 cluster around Little Eagle and may be explained by one animal. Nos. 15-22 tell of one or two animals at a time and take place from late October into early December. The last that was heard of the animals was a rumor heard by Mrs. Gary Alexander and printed in early January 1978 that they had been seen around Eagle Butte (Timber Lake Topic 1978). If the group of animals did move to the south to Eagle Butte and beyond they would enter sparsely populated countryside that extends from Eagle Butte to Philip and from Sturgis to

Fort Pierre (Fig. 6). In this area of almost 10,000 square miles their encounters with humans would be few.

#### CONCLUSION

Accounts of large hairy manlike animals continue to be told as true events. Those from South Dakota in 1977 exemplify experiences that appear in the public record of newspapers every year in many parts of North America. They are not confined to the Pacific Northwest or even this continent. Some of the incidents are over in minutes; others span days or as in South Dakota they happen during several months. The tellers of the stories are left baffled and often ridiculed. Our files gathered over the past decade contain this material, and the bibliographies found in The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch list many books devoted to such accounts. The interpretation given here for events in South Dakota is perhaps not the only one possible. Since the publicity about them did not bring professional scientists to the scene to investigate one would expect they had some other explanation in mind. We would like to learn what that explanation would be. Or perhaps they were only at a loss as to how to actively react to these stories. Certainly it is no one's job to investigate them. Professional men have specific duties to fulfill to earn their livings. And beyond that whose specialty could begin to encompass such happenings if the animals were real? The challenge that faces modern sciences is not the lowering of standards of scientific evidence to admit newspaper stories. The challenge is to find a way to identify that potentially-valuable animal activity is taking place, to collect and examine the best evidence, and to disseminate the findings be they positive

negative, or tentative. Clearly such an effort would have to coordinate the specialties of several professional fields. If a valid enquiry after new primates exists such studies offer an expanding future for primatology and anthropology, and perhaps even a new science will result.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our gratitude for vital assistance must be expressed to John M. Lane and to the staffs of the Aberdeen American News, the Bismarck Tribune, the Pierre Capital Journal, the Eagle Butte News, the McLaughlin Messenger, the Mobridge Tribune, the Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, the Sturgis Tribune, and the Timber Lake Topic.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The 156-page book The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch can be obtained for \$3.25 from the University Press of Idaho, Box 3368, University Station, Moscow, Idaho 83843.
2. In addition to consulting readily-available news sources 11 Dakota newspaper publishers were queried, and 8 responded with assistance during the period from October 1977 through January 1978. Following the cessation of reports in Corson County, South Dakota, in December 1977, enquiries were made to 15 additional newspaper publishers in surrounding counties with negative results at this writing. An accurate but unofficial transcript of one television news broadcast was made because it contained unique information.
3. A different source related that these people were driving along some woods when the animal was seen (McLaughlin Messenger 1977b). Still another

quoted Ralph Taken Alive, not indicated as present at the scene, as saying the animal was seen while people were driving into the yard (Hasner 1977a).

#### REFERENCES CITED

- Atlanta Constitution  
1977 December 1 "Indians Arm Against Bigfoot" Atlanta, Georgia.
- Bayanov, Dimitri and Igor Bourtsev  
1976 On Neanderthal vs. Paranthropus. Current Anthropology 17:312-318.
- Behrens, Carl  
1971 The search for New World man. Science News 99:98-100.
- Bennett, Pauline  
1977 October 20 Letter to the editor Eagle Butte News, Eagle Butte, South Dakota.
- Bismarck Tribune  
1978 January 7 "Where's Bigfoot, They Wonder" Bismarck, North Dakota.
- Boeth, Richard and Elaine Sciolino  
1977 October 31 "Bigfoot Is Back" Newsweek, New York, New York.
- Byington, Mary  
1977 November 10 "It Seems To Me..." Timber Lake Topic, Timber Lake, South Dakota.
- Capital Journal  
1977a October 6 "Big Foot Sightings Continue to Stir Controversy at McLaughlin" Pierre, South Dakota.  
1977b October 17 "Big Foot Watchers Continue to Tramp Little Eagle Area Hoping for Sighting" Pierre, South Dakota.
- Coleman, Loren and Mark A. Hall  
1970 Fall/Winter "Some Bigfoot Traditions of the North American Indians" INFO Journal, No. 3, pp. 2-10. International Fortean Organization, Arlington, Virginia.
- Crippen, Ray  
1977a October 4 "'Old Green Eyes' Seen in South Dakota" Worthington Globe, Worthington, Minnesota.

- Crippen, Ray  
1977b November 8 "Now Who's Laughing at Big Foot?" Worthington Globe, Worthington, Minnesota.
- Davis, Jason  
1977 November 23 Transcript of interview on television news broadcast "Eyewitness News," KSTP-TV, St. Paul, Minnesota.
- Eagle Butte News  
1977 August 18 "'Creature' Sighted Near Green Grass" Eagle Butte, South Dakota.
- Genzoli, Andrew  
1976 May 26 "Redwood Country: Three Cheers for Bigfoot" Times-Standard, Eureka, California.  
1977 September 21 "Redwood Country: Bigfoot Story Captured the Nation 19 Years Ago" Times-Standard, Eureka, California.
- Green, John  
1968 On the track of the Sasquatch. Cheam Publishing, Agassiz, British Columbia.
- Hall, Jo  
1977 November 3 "Bigfoot Publicity Brings Attention to Little Eagle" Mobridge Tribune, Mobridge, South Dakota.
- Hasner, Tom  
1977a September 29 "Northern South Dakotans Search for Monster" Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.  
1977b October 15 "Footprints Abundant, But No Monster" Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Kay, M. W. and F. C. Mish, H. B. Woolf  
1976 6,000 words: A supplement to Webster's Third New International Dictionary. G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, Massachusetts.
- Kinders, Mark  
1977 November 26 "Bigfoot Invasion Upsetting Life in Reservation Hamlet" Bismarck Tribune, Bismarck, North Dakota.
- Lane, John M.  
1978 January 31 personal communication
- Lofgren, Merle E.  
1977 September 22 "From the Top of the Hill" McLaughlin Messenger, McLaughlin, South Dakota.
- McLaughlin Messenger  
1977a September 22 Untitled photograph and caption McLaughlin, South Dakota.  
1977b October 6 "Susqatch (sic) Getting Much Publicity" McLaughlin, South Dakota.  
1977c October 20 "Susquatch Shows Up Again in Little Eagle" McLaughlin, South Dakota.
- Porshnev, B. F.  
1974 The Troglodytidae and the Hominidae in the taxonomy and evolution of higher primates. Current Anthropology 15:449-456.
- Sanderson, Ivan  
1961 Abominable snowmen. Chilton, Philadelphia.
- Sprague, Roderick  
1970 Editorial: In The scientist looks at the Sasquatch, edited by Roderick Sprague and Grover S. Krantz, pp. 27-29. University Press of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.
- Sprague, Roderick and Grover S. Krantz (Editors)  
1977 The scientist looks at the Sasquatch. University Press of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.
- Suttles, Wayne  
1972 On the cultural track of the Sasquatch: In The scientist looks at the Sasquatch, edited by Roderick Sprague and Grover S. Krantz, pp. 39-76. University Press of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.
- Timber Lake Topic  
1977a October 27 "Sightings of Big Foot Reported Over Week-end" Timber Lake, South Dakota.  
1977b November 3 "Big Foot May Have Been in Timber Lake Vicinity" Timber Lake, South Dakota.  
1977c November 10 "Standing Rock Tribe Calls Off Big Foot Hunt" Timber Lake, South Dakota.  
1977d November 17 "Bigfoot Still Roams Little Eagle Country" Timber Lake, South Dakota.

Timber Lake Topic

- 1977e December 15 "Recent Sightings  
Establish Continued Existence  
of Big Foot Creatures in Area"  
Timber Lake, South Dakota.
- 1978 January 5 "Bigfoot and Weather  
Created News in 1977" Timber Lake,  
South Dakota.

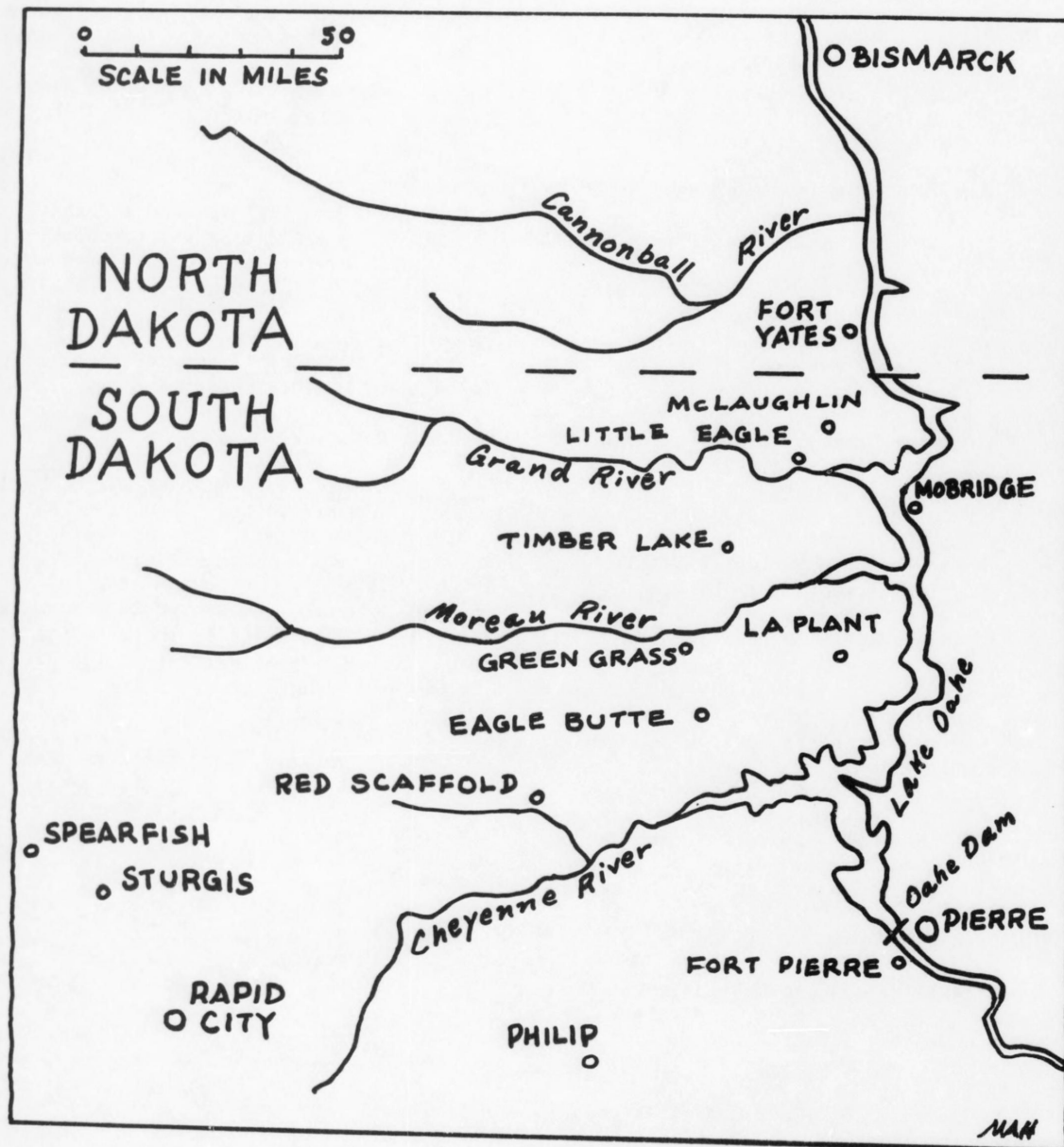


Fig. 6. This map of northwestern South Dakota and part of North Dakota shows locations of animal stories from Spearfish to the Cannon Cannonball River. (Drawn by the author)